

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 508

C O N F I D E N T I A L NASSAU 0410

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT BF

SUBJ: BDP'S DUNCOMBE WINS BY-ELECTION

REF: NASSAU 0290

1. TO NO ONE'S REAL SURPRISE POLITICAL NOVICE KEITH DUNCOMBE, SIR ROLAND SYMONETTE'S HAND-PICKED SUCCESSOR, WON THE SHIRLEA HOUSE SEAT IN FRIDAY'S BY-ELECTION OBTAINING 71 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL VOTES CAST. FNM LEADER CECIL WALLACE-WHITFIELD, WHO ENTERED THE CAMPAIGN TOO LATE AND CAMPAIGNED TOO LITTLE, DID CAPTURE 29 PERCENT OF THE VOTE AND AT LEAST WAS NOT REQUIRED TO FORFEIT HIS DEPOSIT. AT THE SAME TIME THE PLP VOTE FAILED TO MATERIALIZE FOR WHITFIELD AND THAT PARTY'S SUPPORTERS QUITE LITERALLY SAT ON THEIR HANDS. (IN THE GENERAL ELECTION OF JULY 1977, 1,969 VOTES WERE CAST WITH THE BDP'S SIR ROLAND WINNING 1,392 AND HIS PLP OPPONENT 577. IN THE BY-ELECTION EXACTLY 1,395 BALLOTS WERE CAST WITH DUNCOMBE WINNING 984 TO WHITFIELD'S 411.)

2. THE ELECTION HAD LITTLE NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE AND PERSONALITIES WERE FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN ISSUES. IT PROVED ONCE MORE, HOWEVER, THAT WHITFIELD, DESPITE
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A CERTAIN CHARISMA, IS NOT TRUSTED BY OR ACCEPTABLE TO THE ELECTORATE, OPPOSITION OR PLP, AND ONE WOULD HOPE HE WOULD GET THE MESSAGE. (THIS IS HIS THIRD LOSS IN AS MANY TRIES SINCE 1972). GIVEN HIS EGO, HOWEVER, IT REMAINS DOUBTFUL AND HE HAS ALREADY PUBLICALLY STATED THAT WHILE HE "LOST THE SKIRMISH, THEY (THE BDP) WOULD NEVER WIN THE FIGHT." DUNCOMBE CAN BE EXPECTED

TO FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS OF HIS MENTOR, SIR ROLAND,
AND THE HOUSE AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC WILL HAVE
LOST WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN AN EFFECTIVE OR AT LEAST
VOCIFEROUS VOICE FOR THE OPPOSITION.
TAYLOR

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